

Helen Spendlove (wife of Dr. Ray Spendlove, who began practicing medicine in Vernal after World War II)

Uintah County Historical Society meeting, 1986

Helen Spendlove:entitled "What's Happened to the Country Doctor" or something like that. When you get so bored, you even take up reading medical journals, which I found myself doing. These pictures intrigued me because many is the time I've seen this going out through the snow and carrying that little black bag, or this as we've gone around trying to find homes. I am so grateful now that we all have numbers on our homes and street numbers.

When we first came, when I'd take a message for a call, I would have to write about six or eight pages: go to somebody's corner and turn by a red barn and go down this lane and over here and over there. It was interesting, to say the least, but frustrating. Then if he'd call me and say, "Well you didn't take this down right," then there were cross words. I'd said, "Well let's leave then if they haven't got numbers on their houses." But it's been a rewarding time.

Another reason that I became so involved in collecting all that I could find is that I became aware that my husband had practiced longer than any other doctor that had been out in the Basin, forty years, and that interested me. I have compiled it all from the first doctor up until the present, the last one to arrive in town.

I've also been fortunate enough to get one of their text books. This happens to be Dr. [Harvey Coe] Hullinger's, the first doctor we have record of. I'm sure he was the first doctor out here. It's been so interesting to glance in these and read their method of treatment and so on, compared to the last one to arrive in town. Many, many changes.

To begin with, let me give you a quote of Emerson's:

The reward of a thing well done is to have done it. There's no satisfaction quite like doing something, accomplishing something. Physicians and surgeons, perhaps more than any other profession, enjoy a kind of satisfaction that they have earned by the sweat of their souls. When you have a life hanging in the balance and your two hands are what is going to make the difference in the surgery, there are souls that do sweat.

But Emerson neglected to mention that the greatest reward of all was the satisfaction that comes, not just from having done a thing, but from being that kind of a person, the kind of a person that does. With that, I'll try and introduce you to these doctors.

As I say, in forty years there have been so many changes just for us to see. As I type up these histories, the changes we have seen are just nothing compared to what Dr. Hullinger or Dr. Buchtel, or some of the earlier ones had seen. But for us in the forty years, as I might add, besides the numbers on the house which was my pet peeve, we have gone from that old hospital, or that they called a hospital when we came, that was the Episcopal Church, I think a Rectory House or something, wasn't it referred to as that? But that was the hospital when we arrived. We have progressed from that building to our present structure which is modern in every little minute detail.

We have seen changes from when we came, from a little portable X-ray unit that was

years and years old at that time. I finally traced where that, and how, it arrived in the valley, and it came with Dr. O'Donnell. I'm sure she didn't ever carry it around. I don't know how she used it because it is a heavy, cumbersome thing. I happen to have it. But that was the X-ray that they were using when we came, very small and cumbersome and not very good at all. But we've gone and progressed up to the modern, efficient radiology department we have in our hospital today.

As I mentioned, the house calls and the little black bag. Yesterday I was getting these out and I had this picture laying there on my coffee table. My grandson said, "Where's he going, on a trip?" I said, "No, it's a doctor going on a call, that's his bag." "Why did he need a bag if he wasn't going on a trip?" They haven't heard of the doctor bag. So I had to go in and dig out the doctor bag and show him what a doctor's bag was. But we've progressed from that doctor's bag to our paramedics and our efficient EMTs and, of course, our modern, wonderful ambulance.

With that little black bag, most the time the fees were very, very small. Sometimes even chickens, produce, what have you, and it has progressed with these paramedics, EMTs and our marvelous hospital to Blue Cross/Blue Shield and all the insurances. It has also gone from around-the-clock coverage that this era knew. I was amused, he had only practiced twenty-seven years and they had this as a modern medicine magazine. So he's really just a youngster.

From that little black bag and just being on call whenever someone called and you were needed, we've gone now that the doctors have their hours designated on-call, you don't bother them otherwise. Our vacations, as I recall, were always decided on not what we would like to do, but we had to have the OB calendar in front of us and we'd have to go between when Mrs. Jolley or someone else was due and hurry and get back so that there'd be someone to take care of them. That has changed. They all have their month's vacation.

The instruments have changed. The big cumbersome, well they did the job, but they were not the most efficient, and they had to be scrubbed and they had to be sterilized, they had to be wrapped and so on. Now nine-tenths of the surgical instruments are all disposable. When you are through, out they go.

Another thing we see changing as time marches on, the whole family could come in to the doctor. A mother would come in, be taken care of, then she'd want you to look at Jr.'s big toe and Sister had a rash on her shoulder and someone else had something else. Then she'd say, "My husband is out in the waiting room, I'd like you to check his ears." So, it was a time when one doctor, you made a visit and you could take the whole family.

At that time also, the doctor could give you the treatment that he deemed necessary and best for you. That isn't the case today. These insurance companies dictate what they deem appropriate and you either do that or you do not get paid. I think we've lost with all the specialization, perhaps, a lot of the intimate relationships.

After he retired, we kept getting such heart-rendering letters that he was moved to tears many times when we'd open them and what he had meant to certain families. I have kept them and made a little book that I'm sure we will treasure and our children and grandchildren will treasure. That is becoming an impossibility. The doctors just don't have the time to chat or the inclination. If they aren't taking care of the whole family, they don't feel the closeness like if you just go in for one visit. Where you are taking care of the whole family, I know he has shared in the trials, the sorrows, shed tears at times with them and he has also shared the joys of many. It became a part of our lives as he'd come home and relate the happy times and then the sorrow that was always present. And they did have the time to listen, which has become quite impossible now when things have changed so drastically.

To begin with, Dr. Hullinger was our first doctor. This is a very small picture. I'll keep this book up here if any of you would like to look in it after. I'm sorry I have to keep it here to read, I can't pass it around now, but many times as I've retyped and typed and added to, I still haven't got it. Well, it's a lot in my memory, but I'm afraid I might miss some dates.

He was born in 1824 in Champaign County, Ohio. His father was a native of Connecticut. He went to school in Columbus, Ohio, and he received what they termed then a medical degree in 1852. His daughter was a patient of Doctor's [Dr. Spendlove's] for years and years and years. I think if he practiced here forty years, it was thirty-nine and a half years that he was her doctor. No, she died a few years ago. But she would relate incidents that she could recall.

I found so many of those things where she'd say, "A patient came to the door and he'd just bring them in and put them to bed." Well, I won't say there's a great number of times that I've got up in the morning and gone down the hall and found the hide-a-bed made up and someone in there that used to be his patient from out of town, or someone from Bonanza or somewhere came in and were too sick to go home and he'd bring them in and put them in bed.

It's interesting with Dr. Hullinger living in that part of the country. He joined the Mormon Church when he was about seventeen years old. He knew the prophet Joseph Smith; he knew Brigham Young; and he remained a member of the Church throughout his entire life. It dictated a lot where he went and what he did. It's interesting to find out how many trips he made across the plains.

Charles Rich, the grandfather of Dr. Homer Rich, baptized Dr. Hullinger, and that was in Ottawa, Illinois. He happened to be at the time Joseph Smith and [Hyrum] were martyred, he was living just about three houses down from Carthage Jail and was outside the jail that day that he was killed.

His life does read some high-powered fiction. As I say, he crossed the plains a number of times. He learned the language of the Indians so he could help care for them. That, too, came at the suggestion of church leaders. Their wisdom saw where that would be utilized later, so he did learn their language and became known, even after he came out here, as an Indian medicine man. It was October 1883 that he came to the Uintah Basin. There he farmed and doctored. He doctored both the Indians and the whites. He first settled at Jensen. It was, I think, about 1891 before he moved into Vernal. He was married three times. He had four children, two sons, two daughters. The sons both died during the flu epidemic, I think they said 1916 that they died.

Man: 1918 was the flu epidemic.

Helen: Adelbert died in 1916 and the other one in December 1917, is what they say. They attribute it to the flu. Of course, those days when diagnoses were hard to make, it could have been something else. But they both died, as they said, from infection from the flu. The 100th birthday of Dr. Hullinger was celebrated December 2, 1924, when nearly nine hundred people gathered to listen to the words of this great man.

I've been amused in checking these histories, so many times it will say "nine hundred gathered." Now, I don't know where nine hundred could all assemble at one time, but that seems to be a figure that I keep running across, that nine hundred assembled.

This day, for his 100th birthday, the schoolchildren all marched down, wherever this was held, I haven't been able to find out, but they said there were nine hundred there. He delivered quite a sermon to them. They say his voice was strong. Now, I question whether vigorous is the

word, but they said he was vigorous, and they also say that he practiced medicine up until the day he died at a 101 or 102, near his one hundred and second birthday; he received a telegram from President Calvin Coolidge. But in his address that day to the schoolchildren, especially, he talked directly to them. He admonished them to live clean lives. He said, "I want you to be good boys and girls. I want you to study, have a wonderful opportunity in your schoolwork, be always studious and cultivate industry. Pay attention to what your teachers tell you and always do what your parents say." He always admonished them at all times when he was called upon to speak to be honest in everything you do, honest in your studies, honest with each other. You can do anything in life if you will live by these principles that he had given.

He was active in organizing the Democratic Party when Utah was given statehood in 1892 and he was really the father of Uintah County education. He established and equipped a schoolhouse in Jensen before public education had reached Uintah and his daybook is now on microfilm at the Uintah County Library. William [Jolley] has shared some of these things with me and it's most interesting, and I'm sure you'd all be welcome to look at it. Many of his early instruments and books are on display in the DUP Museum and that too is very interesting to see.

This is his daughter, Sarah. She gave me several books. This one she wanted Doctor to have. If they hadn't been so heavy, I wanted to bring some of these later ones of Dr. Seager's and Dr. Wilcken's. *Gray's Anatomy* seems to be the "Bible" of all doctors. This was *Gray's Anatomy*, 1876. But some of the other doctors, I've had them write little histories to put in it and pictures and they are a treasure. I'm getting so many now, I've got to call a halt. This was in the paper when he [Dr. Hullinger] died: "The Grim Reaper Calls Vernal's Beloved Doctor."

You wouldn't believe how many doctors we've had as I've counted them up. We've had sixty-two out here. Some have maybe stayed a few months, some a few years. I've got a list of how long they all [stayed]. Dr. Spendlove, forty years; Dr. Hullinger, granting that he practiced until he was 100, thirty-three years; Dr. Francke, twenty; Dr. Seager, thirty; Dr. Christy, thirty; Dr. Eskelson, twenty-four; Dr. Stringham, to date, twenty-four; Dr. Allen, approximately sixteen; and Dr. Christian, approximately fifteen.

Unidentified Man: How long was Dr. Garrett, Dr. O'Donnell?

Helen: When I get to her page, I'll tell you, but it wasn't very long.

Man: It didn't take her very long to bring me in.

Helen: Oh really? Did she deliver you? I have a hard time. When I have given this report, people tell me interesting things like that and I like to include it in this history. Maybe Barbara would write this, anything down for me. Just write these things that are contributed. I have appreciated every time I have given it, someone has come forth with information that has just made these so much more personal. So anything you can add to this, I'll appreciate you giving us the information. If you'll notice as I pick these pages up, they've all got little notes on. I was somewhere last week and gave this, and I just put these little stickers in here, other little information I found.

Pete Dillman had the drug store. I think it was called the Dillman Drug Store for a while, and the Pioneer Drug Store for a while. He could see that we desperately needed some medical help out here. He bought his drugs from the A.C. Smith Drug Company in Salt Lake. He would

make a trip in maybe once a year, or every eighteen months or so, to get supplies.

When he went in at one time, he asked them if they could recommend a doctor to come out here. We were in desperate need of medical help. So they suggested a Dr. Gardner, but he was told that if he could get Dr. Gardner, he would have to watch him because he had a weakness for liquor. So they said, "If you watch him carefully and keep him sober, he's a fine doctor." Well, he found Dr. Gardner and he was willing to come to this new country and give it a try, but it was only two years before he became an alcoholic, and unable to practice at all, and so he left.

He also, through this Smith Drug Company, found a Dr. Parks. He was only here for about one and a half or two years, and he bought out Pete Dillman's orchard business and gave up medicine entirely; he'd had enough.

There were many doctors came and few stayed. The distances to travel were long, we didn't have the highways and roads we have today. They became discouraged, they weren't making any money, most of the fees were paid with chickens, a lamb or something, so they got very discouraged, and no hospital. Of course, I don't think there were many hospitals around the country at that time, but the facilities were very primitive for them and they did not stay.

The following doctors have been listed as living in Vernal between the years of 1888 and 1900: Dr. Butler (this is [from] an 1891 Uintah Papoose, the ads), Dr. Parks Physician and Surgeon, Dr. Butler. But their addresses—as I say I'm so glad for numbers on your home, call day or night—but "call at Mrs. Haws Dental Parlor." Dr. Parks also would be available but you'd have to find him. If he wasn't in Dillman Drug Store, just have them look for him. So it's a choice little experience in here. There was a Dr. Cunningham, Dr. Hughes, Dr. Hoshaw, Laughlin, Lindsey, Rose, Bjornsen, Frazier—it was this Dr. Frazier I'm reading about, Dr. Russell Frazier, that was responsible for us coming out here—and Dr. Brownfield.

Dr. Frazier had practiced in Bingham Canyon, and, in fact, he delivered my younger sister, but he was quite adventuresome. He loved riding the river and he was always going on some expedition. He was an outdoorsman and I don't know if any of you remember him. As I say, I went somewhere last week to a club and so many of them remembered him, but he was happy, jovial, and he would rather have been outside than inside anytime. I think he almost killed my husband one time trying to take his tonsils out.

This Dr. Rose, let me read just a little, no this is Dr. Butler. He committed suicide. He too was addicted to alcohol and he got into drugs. I guess maybe he was one of our first that got into drugs. The title "Dust to Dust—Is Whiskey the Answer?" He did take his own life and I'll just read just a part of this because it's quite interesting. This was written at 12:30 pm and it's addressed to James Chadwick.

I have taken hydrate of chloral with suicidal intent. My effects shall be sold to pay my expenses. Put me in a plain box. Bury me on your farm 3 feet deep. My valuables shall be at your disposal. Send John Simpson at Coalville my watch also my library. Give John Reeder of my accounts, my saddle and bird. My watch shall be given to John Simpson, Coalville. My accounts and notes to Frank McCormick. Inquisitive as I have been through life in researches, I am still inquiring of the far beyond. It is now 1:15. Tell George Adams I will let him know about that other world if I can. This is temporary insanity, the cause I don't know. I want no funeral ceremony unless W.C. Britt wishes to pronounce the timeless end of Zero. Later, I want no medical treatment, I am tired now. (More matter to

ethereal space.)

Such was the letter that was scrawled as he grew more weary and tired [until they were] unable to decipher the writing. He'd written about another page, but you couldn't read it. [Butler] was born in New York and he was only thirty-two at this time. He received a PhD. He also took a course at Bryant and Stratton's Business College in St. Louis. He practiced at St. Joseph, Missouri, in Kansas, at Burlington, Colorado, and Coalville, Utah. He left a wife and two children in Kansas from whom he separated for personal reasons. [The article] never did mention him getting an MD, but he did have the PhD that he received. At his death he was only thirty-two years old.

In some of the other histories that I have received, Dr. Homer Rich, I guess that will ring a bell, it seems most people remember Dr. Rich. He had written a history of the Uintah Basin Medical Society. He was there when it was formed, but he took it upon himself to go back a few years. He attributes Dr. Buchtel with the beginning of medical care for Uintah County and especially Vernal.

During the diphtheria epidemic on the Indian Reservation, there were two and three dying in a family at one time and it was just a desperate situation. They had no antibiotics, they had nothing with which to treat it and there were such a number dying that they could hardly take care of them. So they sent out a call, I don't know who sent the call, it must have been some city employee or official at the time, but he sent a call to Denver to the university there and they did have a medical school. The message was received by Dr. Buchtel's father who was chancellor at the university.

His son had just graduated from medical school, and when he saw this offer—they did offer to pay his transportation in and to give him a little monthly salary, it doesn't say how much, I imagine it was very meager—he thought that would be a wonderful opportunity for him to come and take over, so he approached his son, and he left immediately to come to Vernal. He also brought with him the first antitoxin that was ever used here. He brought a large supply and he soon had this diphtheria epidemic under control.

The work was just almost too much for him, it was killing him. So he sent a call to his father, "We need more help." With that second call, Dr. Maud Garrett arrived in Vernal and was soon followed by Dr. Christy. They too were from Denver and had received their training there.

You asked me about Dr. Garrett. She was such a small dainty attractive little body as I've read over the history I have found on her. I can't imagine this rough life she must have led, because she'd go on house calls even over to Duchesne and back. She didn't want much to do with the horses so she hired a driver to take her most of the time until she got her own car.

Unidentified woman: Was she also Dr. O'Donnell?

Helen: Yes, she married an attorney here. After she arrived, she met attorney Thomas O'Donnell and they were married. I think she went by Dr. Garrett for maybe a year, then she went by Dr. O'Donnell.

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...and spent a great deal of time in the Sawtooth Mountains where he had to make skis, his only

transportation from camp to camp. It was in 1918 that Dr. Green and a couple of the other doctors that were here were going into the Army, so Dr. Green, knowing he had married his sister, suggested he come out here and take over his practice because he'd already been commissioned to go into the Army. So he came out here. In the meantime, his first wife had died, and after he came to Vernal, he, of course, met and married Margaret Neal who was also a graduate nurse. He continued his practice until about 1963—rather limited the last maybe eight to ten years. [Margaret Neal married Dr. J. Marion Francke.]

Unidentified Woman: He brought me into the world.

Helen: Well good! I'll get you in the book.

Unidentified Woman: ...home out in Ashley ward. He also attended my grandfather Earl when he passed away.

Helen: Wonderful. Well, he was at the first medical society meeting that we happened to attend when we came. But I'll have to be truthful, he suggested we don't unpack our bags, get lost. Then we had Dr. Bowers, and Dr. George Wesley Green was Dr. Francke's brother-in-law.

Dr. Cruickshank, now, he was a mayor here. The only picture I could get I had to go down to the city office and take a picture of the picture that's hanging there. He was a mayor in 1922 and 1923. Then Iva Wilson told me that he, I said, "He looks so stern, I wonder if he ever smiled." She said, "Oh yes, he smiled, and he was even nice enough to ride over horseback to Deep Creek." I'm not sure how far Deep Creek is, but Iva had a brother that was desperately ill and they had sent word and Dr. Cruickshank rode horseback over there and took care of his brother.

I'll just hurriedly read some of these other doctors. I have little, very little, information on most of them. Dr. Pauling, he was associated with Dr. Martin. He was a single man but he, again, was addicted to alcohol. He also started to sniff chloroform, which killed him. He was extremely young when he died. Dr. Shranck, Dr. Reed Rich—now I understand he married a local girl then moved right on to Pasadena, California.

Dr. Leon Saunders, he came out with a CCC camp. He was up on the mountain. It was strange, we happened to sit by him years ago at a medical society meeting in Salt Lake, a banquet they had in there. He asked where we was from. I said, "Vernal." Well, he just, the rest of the night, I got his history. So I said to him, "Would you mind sending me one of your textbooks and write a history?" Well, he wrote a most detailed history, very interesting, and a book that I just cherish because he's written all these little personal ideas that he'd read about a treatment, then he'd say, "But I proved this was better ya, ya ya..." And it's written in there.

Dr. Ralph Hegsted, I hear a lot about him from the older people. I'll just read some of the quotes I've received. Very tall, good-looking man with beautiful, black, curly hair. He married an attractive woman named Henrietta. Sylvia Felch was her hairdresser and she's related a lot of little incidences she can remember. In fact, she lived by them for a while. Henrietta was a very good friend of Margaret Francke's. Henrietta's father took ill, they lived back in Michigan and so she and the husband took their only daughter, several have told me she was a spoiled little brat, now we can't judge too much on that, but they took this child and went back to her father who was desperately ill. Well, the father died, it was some kind of lung infection, and unfortunately

the daughter must have contracted whatever it was and the daughter died. Henrietta became very bitter and would not return to Uintah Basin with him, so he went on into Salt Lake and for a time he was a professor at the University of Utah. He died very suddenly of a very serious illness, now what it could have been, I don't know. But it seemed that they all had the same symptoms and died suddenly after.

Now we come to Dr. John Clark. Dr. Clark also wrote a lengthy article for me. At the time he was quite ill. We have known him over the years. When I started working in the office, I talked to him a lot on the phone, but I couldn't ever remember him meeting me, but he informed me of the very day he met me and where we were and what was said. He must have had a fantastic memory. I guess he was greatly loved by everyone in Vernal, he was a choice man. Now Doctor knew him quite well...

Unidentified Woman: I worked in Dr. Clark's home for a little while. He took out my appendix during the Depression. I think I must have been working to pay for the bill, but I really learned to love him and his wife.

Helen: I haven't heard anyone say anything but kind things about him and what a wonderful way to be remembered.

Unidentified Woman: Grace Hall worked for he and his wife for a long time, she could tell you about him.

Helen: Yes, Grace had told me a little bit about him.

Unidentified Man: There's a number of families here in Vernal who continued him as their family physician and went to Salt Lake regularly to see him.

Helen: He has told us even after he limited his practice to surgery that the others would come in with just common little ailments and he said, "You know, driving that far, I couldn't say I couldn't take care of them." So, he said, "I maintained a general practice along with my surgery." He died last year, no, this year, January 8, 1986. I think he was greatly loved by everyone here. Dr. Hansen. He arrived in Vernal also through the CCC camp. He had been sent out here as a CCC doctor, up on the mountain. When he was released, I don't know how long they sent them for, but then he came down into Vernal also to practice. He was here when we came. I'll have to tell you a little something funny. Our first son was born out here, our daughter, oldest daughter, was born in Salt Lake, but our first son was born out here in that charming little old house-hospital. We didn't go over to the hospital until it was just right, called Dr. Seager and said, "I'll meet you there." We went in and he was delivered about 12:30 or something, got in bed and as my husband left he said, "Okay, be ready in the morning and I'll take you home as soon as I make rounds." Some woman in the next bed raised up and she said, "Don't you let that little whippersnapper touch you again! These young fellows come out and think they know everything and they'll kill more than they take care of, he'll kill you, he'll kill you!" Well, I went to sleep thinking, "Oh dear, he's going to kill me." Well the following morning he came in and he went by the room and waved. Of course, there were six beds in that room, I can understand him not coming in. Then he said, "It won't be long, I'll be back to get you, be up and ready." Well, I started crawling out of

bed and in those days, Dr. Hansen was keeping them right flat on their back for two weeks.

Well, this woman, I never did find out her name, I met her one day in Ashton's and she again told me I was risking my life by going to that dumb little doctor. Anyway, she said to Mrs. Thorne, "Try and make her see the light, if she can just keep her here until Dr. Hansen comes, I think he'll see her." Well, Mrs. Thorne didn't want to let the secret out who I was, and she said, "All right, as soon as I see Dr. Hansen coming." Well, I got out in the hall before Dr. Hansen approached. Well, she let out a yell for Dr. Hansen to come save me from this dumb little doctor.

But he was killed in 1950 in a fall from a horse. His wife is living in Salt Lake, his children, of course, are all married and Dorothy has remarried. I don't get the kind response about him being loving and kind, perhaps they just haven't told me that, but neighbors have said he was very brusque and well...

Unidentified Woman: He was capable but pragmatic.

Helen: I'll have to tell you just a short little story about this picture. In fact, some of you may know, but he was a schoolteacher at the high school and this was before he moved down to the home where we're living now, but he knocked at our door one night all doubled over. Oh, he was sick. He had been up decorating for a Jr. Prom. Of course, it didn't take long to know what was wrong, he just couldn't straighten up, he was nauseated. So, Ray put him in the car and took him over to the hospital and said he was going to have to take out his appendix.

Well he didn't want that appendix out, he had a date the following night and he was serious about this girl. He was really going to marry her and he could not have that appendix out. So, he called Dr. Eskelson, whose bedroom adjoined the hospital and he could be out of his bed and over then in ten minutes, which made it very nice and convenient. Well, Dr. Eskelson told him if he wanted to live to get married he'd better, as he said, "Shut up and get your appendix out." So they did take his appendix out. They put him to bed and I guess about that time it was 3:00 in the morning.

The next day Ray went to buy a corsage for his date and pick up a tuxedo and went back to the hospital and they got him into the tuxedo and then went and picked up his date, who was Byron Goodrich's daughter and lived right through the block from us, and Ray went to the prom with them, then took him back to the hospital and put him to bed.

Unidentified Man: What was this girl's name, the daughter?

Helen: I think it was Donna. Of course, he was giving her her diamond that night, so that was so important. So Ray said, "You'll have to wait until you get over to the hospital to give her the diamond because we've got to get you back to bed." So he got him undressed and sent Donna in and she got her diamond over in the hospital.

This Dr. Eskelson. They say Dr. Frazier sent us out, or suggested Ray come out. He [Dr. Ray Spendlove] had been in the Army for a number of years with the paratroopers, had been in the Pacific, and he'd been over there a couple of years, came home, and got out about five months sooner that we could get into the hospital at Kentucky. He went to school in Louisville, Kentucky, took his internship, and [had] started a residency there when war was declared, and he went down to volunteer to go in the Army.

Dr. Frazier, being familiar with this area, he came down to visit us one night and

welcome Ray home and he said, "Now you're not just going to sit around for five months, you've got to put your talents to good use. You go out and help my friend in Vernal, Utah." We had never been to Vernal, I had no idea where it was. Well, he decided to drive out and see what it was like. He called me and said, "It's a lovely place, I think you're going to really enjoy it, we can stay here and help him and he needs help desperately."

Well, he came the following weekend and picked me up with our little daughter that he hadn't seen and I thought we could have just sat around for three or four months and got acquainted. But as it was, we came out here and then I didn't see him at all. But it was to help Dr. Eskelson who was a friend of Dr. Frazier's. Of course, we fell in love with Dr. Eskelson gradually. I think Ray fell in love with Vernal immediately, it took me a little while, but now I'm surely glad to call it home.

Unidentified Woman: What year was it you came?

Helen: We came in '46. The first of the year. He left about the middle of January to come out here. He got home just in time for Christmas. We had Christmas together, then he came out the first week in January to look it over, then I came out the middle of January. But he has written a little tribute to Dr. Eskelson, and rather than read what I've got that is just facts and figures, may I share this that he has written about Dr. Eskelson:

The lettering on the window at 75 West Main let you know that this was the office where Dr. F.G. Eskelson, M.D., practiced medicine in Vernal, Utah. The young man studying the office front was wearing a military uniform of Captain, Medical Corps, 11th Airborne Division, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Inside his coat pocket were three letters of introduction dated the first of February of '46, all signed by Dr. Russell G. Frazier, M.D. The letters were addressed to F.G. Eskelson, Rice Cooper, and Henry Millecam.

Entering into the doctor's waiting room the captain found himself shoulder to shoulder in a standing group centered in a circle of chairs which were all occupied. He edged his way towards the receptionist's desk where Edna, the doctor's wife, was busily occupied. Mrs. Eskelson made a survey of the uniform, [he didn't have any clothes, our trunk had been lost from Louisville to Utah and when he got out, you couldn't go in a buy a suit of clothes], as she heard the Captain out. "Just a moment and I'll show you in to the doctor."

On entering his exam room, the tall, elderly, dignified gentleman wearing a knee-length, white office jacket came to his feet, proffered a hand and a broad smile. The art of arising to his feet made manifest a very pronounced limp. The handshake was warm and firm, but also evidence of prior hand injury. His countenance manifested a gentle, warm, kindly personality. There was tiredness and weariness evidenced on his face but his immaculate dress, mirror shoe shine, fresh-dress apparel, jewel tie pin, prominent gem on the ring on his finger, clean shaved, all told me here was a doctor with self-respect and a professional self-image.

"This is Captain [Spendlove] with a letter from Dr. Frazier," Mrs. Eskelson announced. "Oh I know, I know, Dr. Frazier has already called me. Take off your hat and coat, Doctor, and please go to work with me this very minute. I'll be so grateful." And thus commenced the relationship which later, [in] July 1946 added Dr. T.R. Seager and ended with Dr. Seager's retirement in 1976.

Dr. Eskelson's experiences were many and varied before he entered medicine. He graduated from Northwestern in Chicago in 1923, completed internship at San Francisco General Hospital in '24 and later took post-graduate training in Vienna. The circumstances of the Rangely oil boom necessitated Dr. Eskelson's practice to be a hurried one due to the sheer force of numbers. Yet he had gone into livestock and agriculture to the extent that was not awkward to take, as he often did, his fees in poultry, pigs, sheep, cattle, hay. If occasion seemed appropriate to him, he would write off the whole fee and take nothing.

Not only was his appearance professional, his attitude, demeanor, habits and his speech all high-key. He was very practical. He made the Episcopal parish house into a hospital, built his home adjacent to it with a passage directly from his bedroom into the hospital. At 3 am he could receive a phone call, climb into his scrub suit and be in the delivery room in two minutes. He responded immediately day or night, to all who called for services.

His leg injury slowed him down considerably, but he kept pretty close watch over his pure-bred Angus Aberdeen cattle. He enjoyed the operation of Green Lake's Resort while he leased it. He enjoyed his service in the Lion's Club, into which he brought Dr. Spendlove and Dr. Seager. From 1932 when he came to Vernal until his death at seventy-one in 1956, Dr. Eskelson was a great asset to Vernal and the Uintah Basin. His funeral was held in the old First Ward Chapel just one block from his home and hospital and I was so honored to be one of the speakers.

Unidentified Man: Do you know what caused his limp? I know he had an accident somehow.

Helen: Yes, he had an automobile accident.

Unidentified Man: I never knew what caused it.

Helen: He was severely handicapped.

Unidentified Woman: I was going to say Dr. Eskelson delivered my daughter at 2:30 in the morning and he turned she and I both over to your husband the next morning and then left on vacation.

Helen: And this was the picture of how we found that little hospital when we came. Alvin Weeks was the administrator and we have Bill Hatch, Mrs. [Rosalie] DeJournette, Beth Sweatfield, and

beloved little Mrs. Thorne.

As I say, he [Dr. Spendlove] came in a uniform and it was quite some time before clothes [could be purchased] in a store. But once he got into scrub clothes, he didn't need them. Dr. Seager was practicing in Bingham. We had known him and knew he wasn't too happy there, knew that he loved the out-of-doors, so when we could see that we had to have more help, that this working around the clock, they had to have help, we contacted Dr. Seager and he and Dorothy came out, took one look at the mountains, the fishing that was available, the hunting and no doubt, they moved out.

This was a magazine called the *Utah Medical Bulletin* published in January 1977. They had asked Ray to write an article about the care in Vernal so he entitled it "Shangri-la Long Overlooked" and wrote quite a lengthy article about the health care out here. At that time, of course, we had moved into the other hospital. Just at the very end, he said at the close of this article, "Praise be to the memory of one John Arnold [I don't know if any of you remember John Arnold, but we are certainly indebted to him], a hospital administrator now living in Colorado who had the time, the foresight to dream and plan for Vernal. Although he failed in his gallant effort to gain a new hospital at the time [we already had this that we called the new hospital], but he had the personality and the intelligence and the drive that he went into Salt Lake and made the contacts with the medical group in there and was able to convince them of our great need out here for additional help. It was through John Arnold's untiring efforts and his ability that the University doctors started coming out.

"We built the addition onto the Vernal clinic for them to occupy. It was through John Arnold that we got the family health center and he worked so hard, had drawn plans for the hospital, and I think a lot of the plans were used in the later hospital that was built. We do owe him a great debt for all he did for us. It's unfortunate his name isn't remembered by more, because the groundwork he laid for our radiology department that we have today, he was responsible for bringing the first radiologist out here to read X-rays and to help in diagnosing problems. We owe him a great debt."

I can see Dr. Stringham here, we'll end with Dr. Stringham. Dr. Christian. I guess to talk about Dr. Christian, he was my family doctor when I couldn't get my own doctor, he was locked in the obstetrical department for so long, if I ever had an emergency with the children or anything, I'd call Dr. Bruce and I'm sure you all know his history. I'll read just a tiny bit of this because this is another tribute that Ray wrote.

"Dr. Bruce Christian was really the small-town boy being born and reared on a farm in Lusk, Wyoming, near the South Dakota border. There he married Mary Clark, the sweetheart of his youth on July 20, 1943. They were married in Harrison, Nebraska. Not yet in medical school, which would have deferred military service until graduation, he entered the air force in WWII and became a pilot. The war ended before his unit was sent overseas. While he trained as a pilot, Mary worked at a munitions factory in Lincoln, Nebraska. At war's end he was accepted into medical school at Rochester, New York, where he also found time to work for Eastman Kodak. There he developed the hobby of photography."

That happened to be my husband's hobby also, and oh, they would work until the wee hours of the morning and then I'd hear them both come down. We had a darkroom built in the house. They'd be down there developing film until it was about time to go back to surgery in the morning.

"Later, he [Dr. Christian] also developed a hobby of carpentry, in which he became very

proficient. I don't know if any of you have seen any of his work, it was just exquisite. He graduated at Rochester in '52 and finished internship at Lansing, Michigan. On coming to Vernal, he opened practice at 75 West Main where the Vernal Clinic had been before. For a relatively short time, Dr. Christian was associated with Dr. Dellafield. His strong motivation to constantly upgrade the quality of medical services made him the kind of a physician that every community would love to have and his efforts really upgraded medical service in Vernal.

"He spent many hours and many months qualifying himself in electrocardiography, then he undertook a lengthy proctorship in anesthesiology. I don't see the year on that, but he spent months driving to Salt Lake for two to three days every week to study anesthesiology. Sadly, a deadly malignant tumor was ticking silently away at his brain and eventually it became very obvious to all around him. Tedious surgery removed the difficult to approach tumor, but he was informed that total removal of the malignancy was by no means certain. After a lengthy recuperation he returned to doing anesthesia, but suffered weakness of his muscles, difficult coordination, and visual problems. Reoccurrence of the tumor was not long in manifesting itself. Following recuperation, he again returned to the operating room, but it proved to be too much for him. His condition deteriorated and he virtually became bedridden with Mary in constant attendance.

"Sometimes he'd seem to rally without explanation and unbelievably he would improve to the point he could get in his car and he would drive the few blocks down to my home and we would keep abreast of what was going on. But it was up and down and up and down. I spent one night at that home with Mary, we were sure he would go any minute, but as usual, Bruce rallied. Mary was reconciled to caring for his every need on a twenty-four hour basis when a strange circumstance changed the whole outlook. Mary suffered a severe injury to the large femur of the leg just getting out of bed one morning. X-ray studies showed the fracture had so easily occurred because of a far-advanced cancer of the bone.

"Mary's death was quick in coming and Bruce finished his days alone in a Salt Lake nursing home. He died in 1979. His funeral was held in Kingsbury Community Church, burial was in Lusk, Wyoming, and I again was honored to be a speaker at his funeral. Bruce left three children, all adults now, Clark, Joyce and Penny.

"It was Dr. Christian that spearheaded and organized and saw through to completion the Dinaland Country Club. He was also instrumental in securing the construction of the Vernal Scout House. He was a member of the Kiwanis Club, and he served as president in 1959 and was so proud of that office. His early demise was a tragic loss to our community."

I think the rest you are all quite familiar with Dr. Stringham, Dr. Allen. We also, in the meantime, had Dr. Van Wieren, Dr. Mountford, Dr. Dellafield, and Dr. Fowler and Dr. Parker Davies. Dr. Balka was with the university group that came out. I'll never forget the first day he walked into the office. He came in with that big, bushy, black beard. He had cowboy boots on that looked like he might have walked from Salt Lake out, and he came over to me and said, "I'm Dr. Balka." I thought, "Hmm." But we grew to love him. He was a hard worker. He was one that would be willing to work around the clock.

We had got into this new generation that objected to the ways the older doctors had been working. No way were they going to do it. They would sit with their feet up at 4:00, and you just don't bring anyone in, no phone calls, no nothing, time to go home. But Dr. Balka was a tireless worker. He had received his medical training at the University of Utah through a grant, a government grant, that was given to students if you passed requirements that would pay for your

education. In return you were supposed to spend several years repaying that. There couldn't have been any place that needed him more than Vernal, but somehow, somehow, the Army said, "He's got to go and he left and went back to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and was discharged in 1981. We've kept in touch with Dr. Balka, he was in town several weeks ago, but he's living now in Green River, Wyoming, and he's a company doctor up there for Allied Chemical. He wanted to come back here, then when he thought of those twenty-hour days, he went to Green River. He was a tireless worker and contributed much.

Through Dr. Balka, he met several of our doctors that had been coming in lately at Ft. Sill where they were repaying military obligations, and each one, he'd talk up Vernal and so several of these new ones had been the result of Dr. Balka telling them what a wonderful place this was. We had Pat Mulgam, Jack Summers, Morris Matthews. I don't know if any of you remember Dr. Matthews, he was in with Dr. Balka in the family health center, but he left to go take a residency in anesthesiology. He was a very likable young man. He happened to be the anesthesiologist on the first mechanical heart implant.